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GB 2002327A  
GB 1350591  
GB 1240515  
GB 1046518  
GB 821070  
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FR 1358247A  
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(54) Receptacle Closures

(57) In a wall of a receptacle 1 for children's nightclothes is an opening (4) which is closed by a member 5 made of a sheet of foam plastics or rubber with abutting edges defining an expansible slit or hole 6 through

which a hand may be inserted during filling or emptying. The member 5 is flanged at the periphery of the slit 6 to increase the tendency for the slit 6 to close tightly. Alternatively, the slit 6 may be defined by overlapping edges (8, 9, Figure 5, not shown) of the member 5. The receptacle may be rigid or flexible.

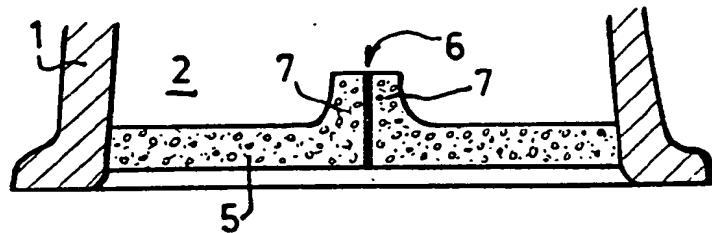


FIG.4

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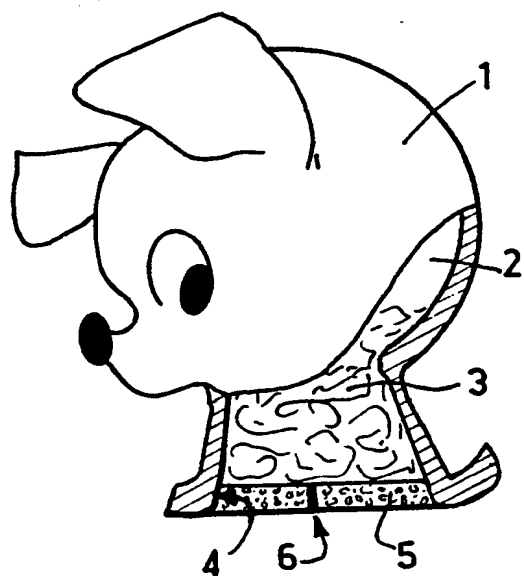


FIG. 1

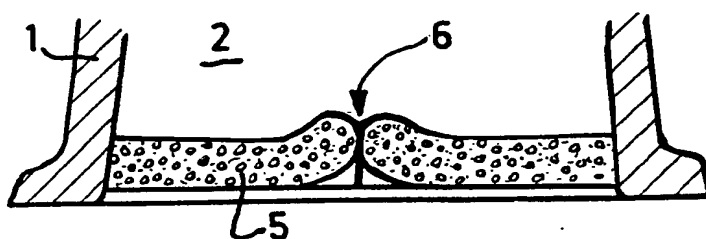


FIG. 3

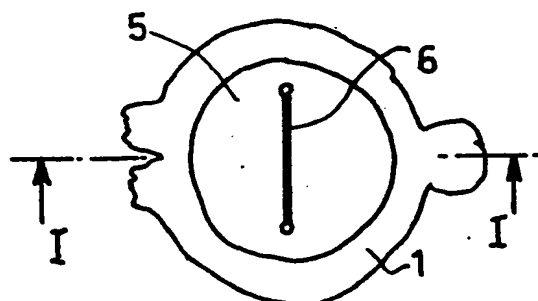


FIG. 2

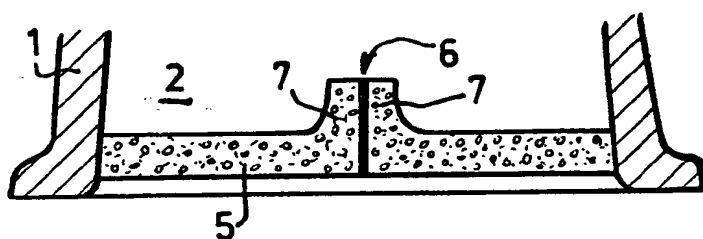


FIG. 4

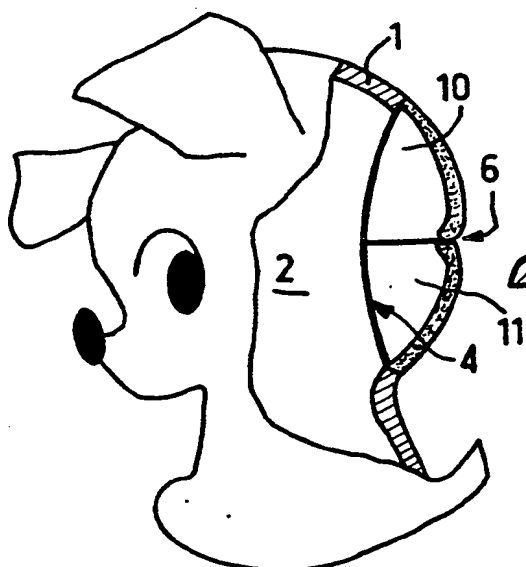


FIG. 6

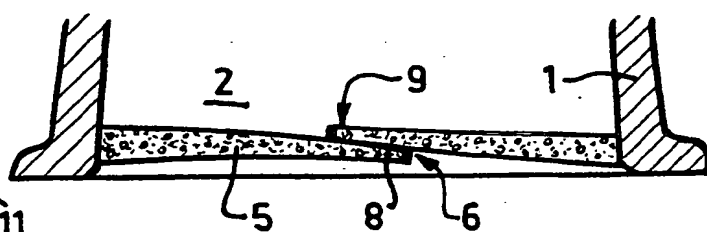


FIG. 5

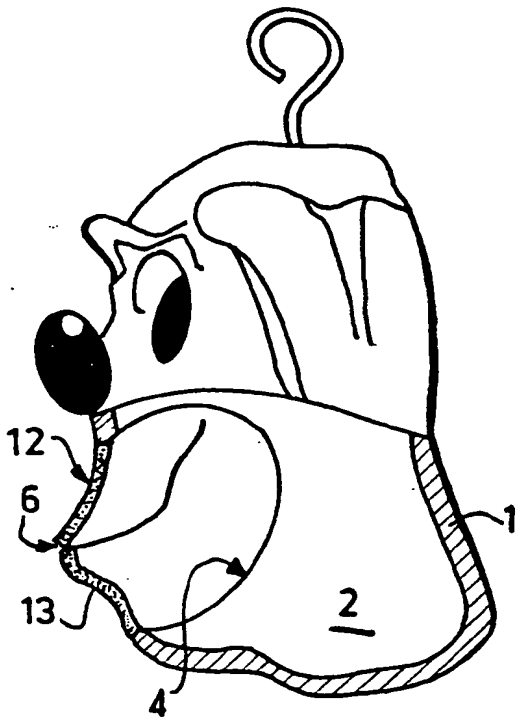


FIG. 7

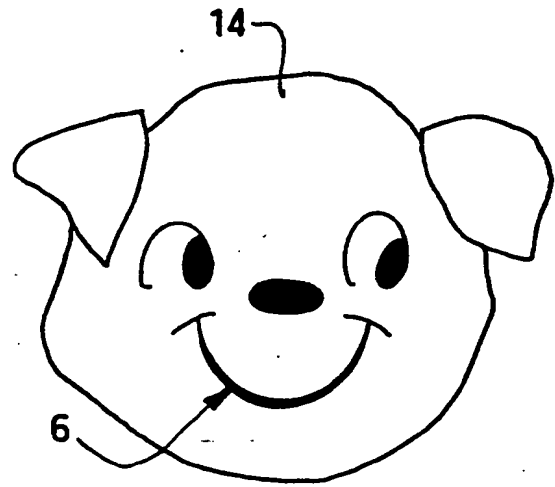


FIG. 8

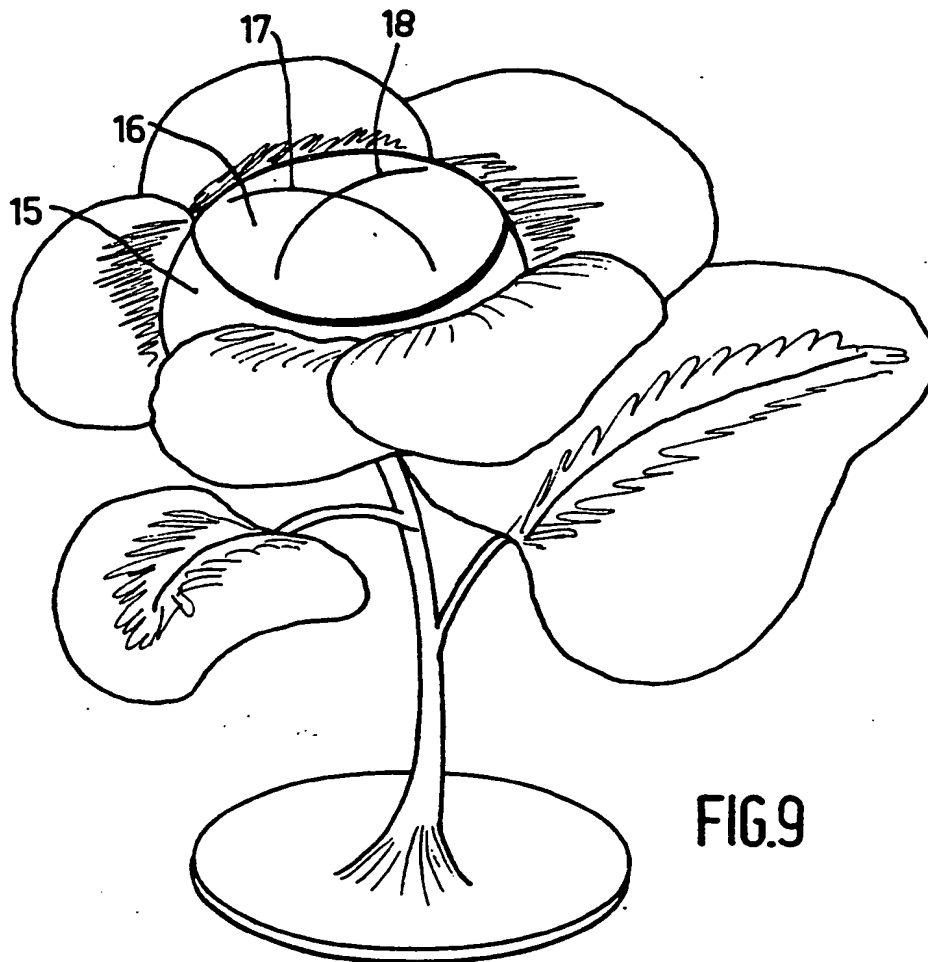


FIG. 9

## SPECIFICATION

## Storage Devices for Miscellaneous Articles

The present device relates to storage devices for miscellaneous articles, in particular, nightclothes.

The invention is more particularly concerned with storage devices such as holdalls and pyjama bags for young children.

At the present time storage devices for children are usually made as fabric protecting bags or pouches generally attached to a head covered with furry or plush material to form a doll-like plaything representing an animal or other familiar character, the essential purpose of this type of presentation being to amuse the young child and to encourage him to put away his personal belongings which also helps him to learn good habits.

The opening of known protecting bags permitting articles to be introduced either have no closures or have conventional fastener devices with buttons and buttonholes, snaps or press-buttons, slide fasteners, or strips of fastener fabric sold under the trade mark Velcro.

In the first case where no closures are provided, the opening of the pouch or bag remains wide open after the article or articles are inserted, which does not fully protect them from dust and is unattractive. A storage device of this type is disclosed in US Patent No. 3,126,237 in which an open bag or sack is adapted to receive soiled clothing.

In the second case where a conventional fastener is provided, the opening and closing of the bag or pouch is relatively complicated and rebuffs the young child who finds it difficult to put away any articles himself. This is the case with the holdall disclosed in French Patent No. 1,358,247 where a slide fastener is employed.

Consequently known devices either do not fulfill their storage function of keeping their contents free of dust and out of sight or do not fulfill their educational role for which they were initially designed.

An object of the present invention is therefore to provide a storage device which not only provides good protection of the articles to be stored owing to effective closing of the inlet and also creates no problems for the child but, on the contrary, encourages him to put away his things.

According to the invention there is provided a children's storage device for miscellaneous articles, comprising receptacle having an opening in a wall thereof, an elastic closure member of supple material closing off the opening, the closure member having an inlet orifice.

Preferably, the inlet orifice comprises a slot, with abutting edges or margins and the closure member is formed of rubber or foam plastic. The attendant advantages of such a closure member will be easily understood owing to the fact that the elasticity of the material constituting the closure member is self-closing after inserting the article, protecting it from dust and hiding it from

sight, without in any way frustrating the child. On the contrary it affords the child an extra play activity as he will enjoy sliding his arm through the inlet orifice without any risk of injury or even slight pinching.

The invention will now be described in greater detail with reference to particular embodiment given by way of non limiting example and illustrated in the accompanying drawings, in which:

Fig. 1 shows a storage device embodying the invention in side elevation with the lower part partly broken away;

Fig. 2 shows a bottom view of the storage device of figure 1;

Figs. 3 to 5 show cross-sectional views of the supple closure member embodying the invention; and

Figs. 6 to 9 show various alternative embodiments of the storage device according to the invention.

As shown in figure 1 the storage device embodying the invention essentially comprises a rigid receptacle or container 1, for example of moulded plastics material, having the configuration of familiar children's character (a dog, cat, rabbit, teddy bear, plant or the like). The receptacle or container 1 has an internal cavity 2 adapted to receive articles 3 for storage. The cavity 2 communicates to the surroundings through an opening 4 which is closed or sealed by a closure member 5. The periphery of the closure member 5 is fixed, e.g., glued, to the edges or margins of the opening 4 and the central part of the closure member 5 has an inlet orifice 6 which is formed as a slot.

The closure member 5 is formed by a sheet of elastically deformable material, for example, spongy foam plastic material coated or covered with a plastic film, membrane, varnish, glue, paint or the like, which closes off the pores of the foam for the purpose of sealing and hygiene.

The inlet 6 is preferably formed by abutting lips sufficiently long to enable the child's hand holding an article, such as nightclothes, to be inserted after spreading open the adjacent edges or margins of the lips. Foam plastic is chosen sufficiently firm to resist deformation due to the weight of the article 3 accommodated in the receptacle or container 1 bearing on the lips (figure 1). A foam polyester, e.g. foam polyurethane, may be selected, and a suitable thickness of the closure member 5 will be provided as a function of the weight of the articles to be borne so that the lips of the slot 6 remain in continuous contact (figure 2).

The edges or margins of the slot may be reinforced by parallel flanges or beads 7 increasing the elastic pressure exerted on each other 5 (figures 3 and 4). Likewise, it is not mandatory that the edges or margins of the slots be in abutting contact so long as the opening is closed. Accordingly, overlapping edges or margins 8 and 9, for example, may be provided (figure 5).

According to an alternative embodiment, the

closure member 5 is not made from a single sheet in which a slot is formed as in the above-described embodiments but from two sheets which are in abutting contact and close off or seal the opening of the cavity 2 of the receptacle or container 1. Depending whether the biasing force which press against each other the contacting edges or margins of the sheets which define the inlet orifice or slot 6 is a greater or lesser force, the resulting sealing will be correspondingly good. The contact pressure causes a bulging of the edges or margins thereby increasing their transverse moment of inertia resulting in enhanced resistance to bending (figure 3).

This relative rigidity of the lips is required, as been already been seen, when the article or articles lie at least partially on the closure member 5 inside the cavity 2, in other words when the opening 4 of the receptacle or container 1 is disposed under the article or articles.

Since, according to a preferred feature, the storage device is intended to be hung rather than free-standing, the provision of a bottom opening is preferred over a side opening because it is easier to reach and more appealing to the child who will enjoy inserting his hand holding the article into the receptacle or container and removing it therefrom without the article falling.

Of course this arrangement is not at all restrictive and side openings may be envisaged, in which case, since the article or articles do not bear against the closure member, it may be thinner and more supple. This is illustrated in figure 6 where the same character as in figure 1 is provided with a side opening 4 cut out of the back of the head and not an opening at the base of the neck. The opening is hermetically sealed by two foam plastic sheets 10 and 11 glued to the edge of the opening and squeezed edgewise against each other to define an inlet slot 6 with abutting edges similar to those shown in figure 3.

The slot may also be formed as part of the face of the head (figures 7 and 8) and make up features of the face by defining the mouth. The closure member may be formed as two supple sheets of foam plastic 12 and 13 glued along the edge of an opening or cutout 4 formed in the head. The sheets about so as to form at their junction a slot 6 marking the mouth of the figure (figure 7) or made by a moulded sheet of foam preshaped with the facial features of the character. This sheet itself forms the face and, if necessary, the entire character (figure 8), the mouth of the character serving as the inlet slot 6.

Finally, when the storage device is constructed to be free-standing and embodies for example a big flower (figure 9) with the central part 15 defining a receptacle or container for articles, the opening may be provided on upper side and closed off by a closure member 16 having one or more inlet slots, for example two slots 17 and 18, in cruciform arrangement to define four abutting segments forming the tongue s or leaves of the closure member. It is to be noted that the inlet orifice or slots through the closure member 5 may

be straight lines (figure 2), curved lines or any contour whatever (figures 7 and 8).

The scope of the invention is of course not limited to the embodiments, given above by way of non limiting example, but it also encompasses all alternatives, variations and expedients without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention.

In the foregoing embodiments the inlet orifice comprises only one or more slots but it should be fully understood that this inlet orifice may be a circular or oblong hole, the edges or margins defining the hole being stretched during the insertion of the article and retracting on their own when the child's hand has been withdrawn. The advantage afforded by the elastic closure member is that of a variable-size opening enabling relatively bulky items to be introduced and adequate closure of the inlet orifice in the rest position.

Moreover, the storage device may also be made entirely of supple material, such as expanded plastics. In this case, the elasticity of the edges or margins of the inlet orifice is obtained by securing, for example by gluing, elastic pieces of foam plastics or rubber along the edges and inside the cavity. The elastic pieces secured internally serve as internal springs which prevent the edges or margins of the inlet orifice of the storage device from losing their shape.

#### Claims

1. A storage device for miscellaneous articles, comprising a receptacle having an opening in a wall thereof, an elastic closure member of supple material closing off said opening, said closure member having an inlet orifice.

2. A storage device as claimed in claim 1, said inlet orifice comprising a slot with abutting edges or margins.

3. A storage device as claimed in claim 1, wherein said inlet orifice comprises a slot with overlapping edges or margins.

4. A storage device as claimed in any of the preceding claims, wherein said closure member is formed of spongy foam plastic (or rubber).

5. A storage device as claimed in any of the preceding claims, wherein said closure member is formed of spongy foam polyester.

6. A storage device as claimed in claim 4, wherein said foam plastic (or rubber) is coated with a plastic film sealing surface pores of said foam.

7. A storage device as claimed in claim 2, or 3, wherein said closure member essentially consists of two juxtaposed sheets with said edges or margins being formed on lips defining a slot.

8. A storage device as claimed in any of claims 1 to 5, wherein said closure member essentially consists of a moulded sheet preshaped to the desired configuration of part of said storage device.

9. A storage device as claimed in claim 1, said receptacle being made of supple material, and wherein said closure member comprises pieces of

supple elastic material secured inside each said receptacle along edges or margins defining said inlet orifice.

- 5 10. A storage device as claimed in claim 1, said inlet orifice being a circular or oblong hole, the edges or margins defining the hole being stretchable to permit the introduction of an article into said receptacle.

- 10 11. A storage device as claimed in any of the preceding claims, said receptacle being adapted to accommodate children's nightclothes.

- 15 12. A children's storage device substantially as herein described and illustrated in figures 1, 2 and 3, or as modified by figure 4, figure 5, figure 6, figure 7, figure 8, or figure 9 of the accompanying drawings.

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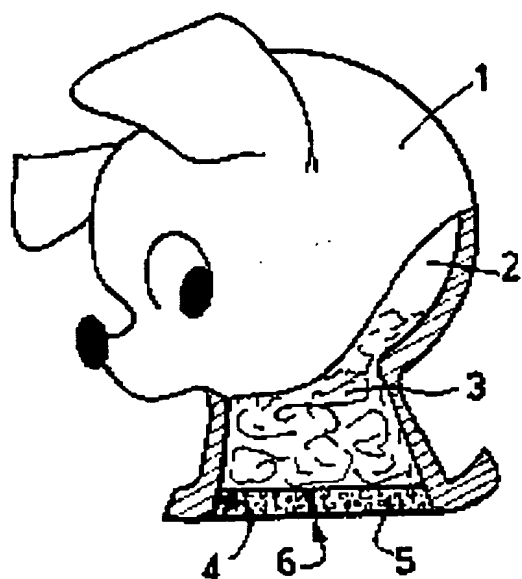


FIG. 1

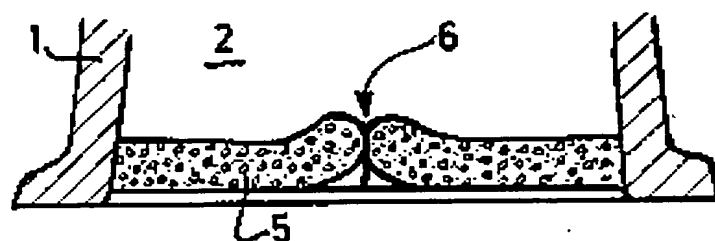


FIG. 3

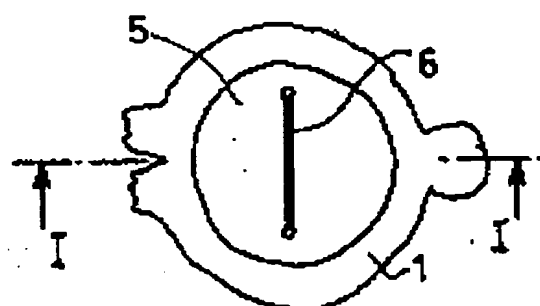


FIG. 2

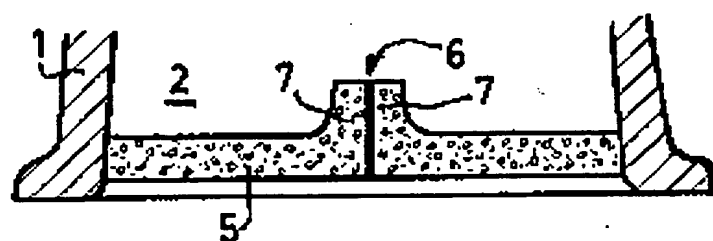


FIG. 4

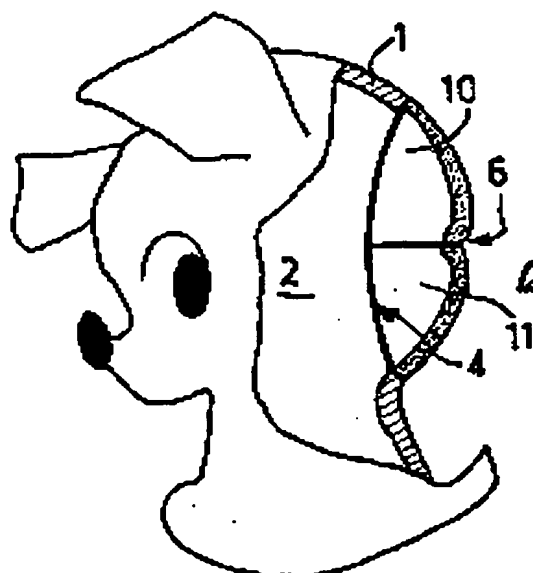


FIG. 6

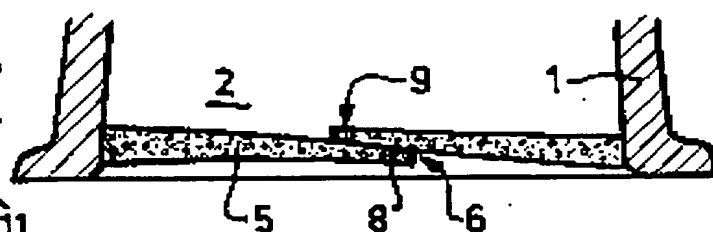


FIG. 5

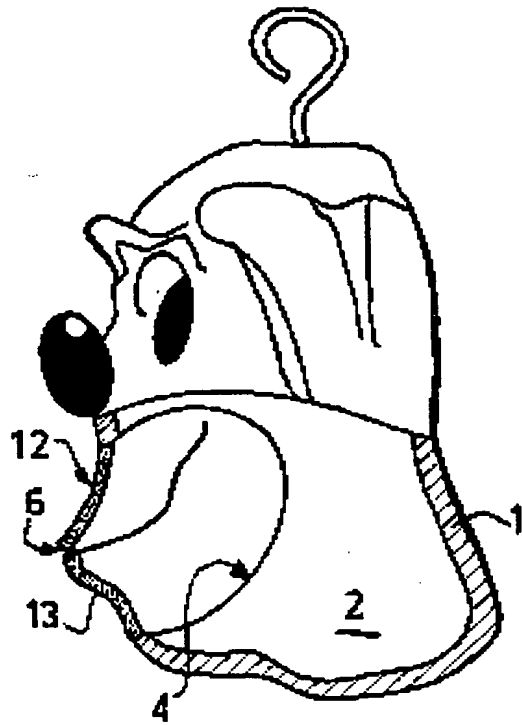


FIG. 7

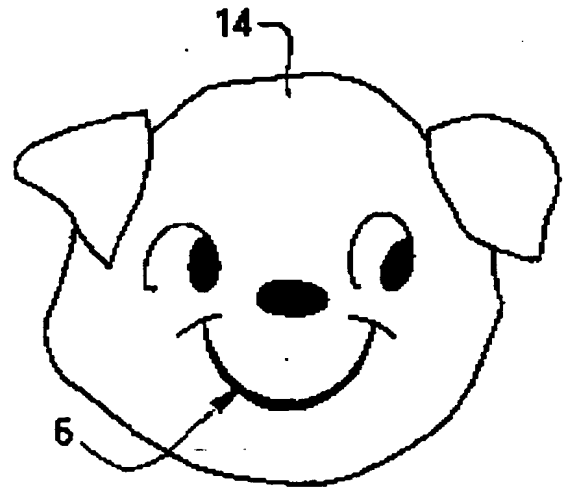


FIG. 8

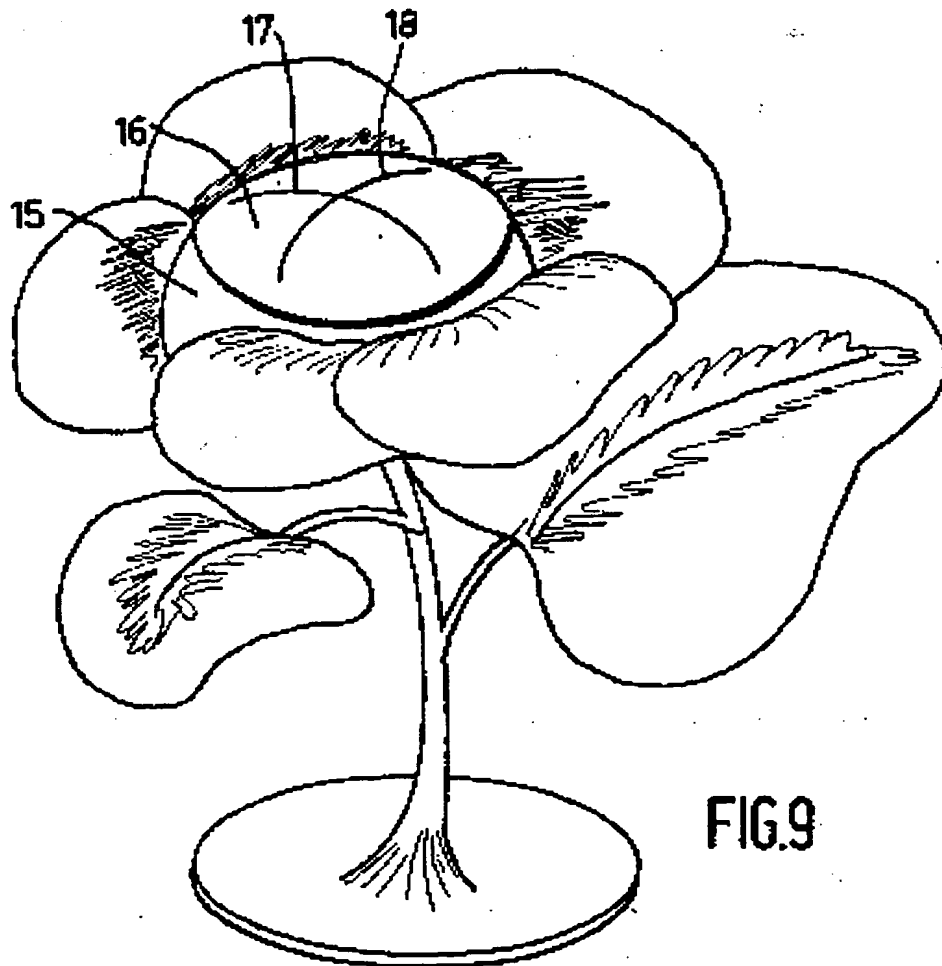


FIG. 9